

THE PRE-K PARENT POST

Ready to learn...Ready for school
Activities for Georgia's Pre-K children and families

Fifth Edition



"My child is in constant motion. She is always climbing, whirling, jumping, and flying! Does this type of physical activity have any real purpose, or is it just wild and silly?"

Healthy four-year-olds are active. They use their arms and legs freely and energetically! They can run, climb, jump, and wiggle for hours without getting tired. These activities are useful for strengthening the large muscles of the body, developing balance and coordination, and releasing stored energy. In addition, these activities encourage children to explore the world.

Think of your child's body as an engine. Sometimes the engine is running on low speed and sometimes on high speed. Some "engines" seem to run at "full speed ahead" all the time! This level of activity can seem awkward and silly to an adult.

At age four, children are just beginning to understand that they can use their body movements to express ideas. Your child may need your help in focusing on meaningful and safe activities. For example, set aside 10–15 minutes for undivided play with your child. Tell her, "Okay, you be Supergirl, and I'll be a kitten stuck in a tree. How can you get me down?" This helps her think through a plan of purposeful movements.

In the Pre-K program, children have lots of opportunities for expressive physical movement. They might be seedlings, first planted in the soil, and then slowly stretching to grow after the soil has been watered. They can change from caterpillars to cocoons to graceful butterflies fluttering in the air. They might become lively marching bands and galloping ponies.

It is critical that children recognize physical activities as an important part of healthy lifestyles. Children's experiences with movement should be fun and build confidence, so they are motivated to remain physically active throughout life. You can encourage your child to feel confident about her ability to express ideas through movement. She will be developing important skills and having fun as well!



FEATURED WEB LINK

www.parenttoparentofga.org

A website geared toward providing support and information services to parents of children with disabilities or special health care needs.





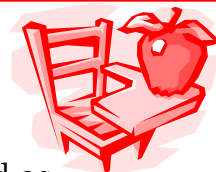
Caps for Sale: A Tale of a Peddler, Some Monkeys, and Their Monkey Business

By Esphyr Slobodkina

A peddler walks around selling a tall, tottering pile of hats on his head. Unable to sell a single cap one morning, he walks out into the countryside, sits down under a tree, and falls asleep. When he wakes up, the caps are gone and the tree is full of cap-wearing monkeys. Children will love his attempts to get back the caps.

Look for this book, or a similar one, at your local public library.

CLASSROOM CORNER



When you visit your child's classroom, you will see many "learning centers" where important learning takes place. In this issue of *The Pre-K Parent Post*, we feature the **Playground**.

At first observation the playground is buzzing with activity, most of which seems chaotic and random. Children are running this way and that; voices are raised; speeding trikes seem to be accidents waiting to happen. Off to one side, two or three children huddle and whisper. One child wanders aimlessly. Teachers move about talking, assisting, and interacting with the children. In addition to the development of physical skills on the playground, social skills are practiced as children make up games, change rules, negotiate roles, and play out experiences from their lives.

Large muscles are developed as they climb, run, pedal, slide, and swing. Safety is always a priority as children are encouraged to take risks within limits—to climb to the top and slide down the pole with an adult close by. Grand feelings of accomplishment and self-worth arise when a challenge is met. Beyond the seeming chaos, a world of learning is in progress.

HOME CONNECTION

You can support your child at home by creating a schedule that includes outdoor time each day. Take daily walks. Walk in different ways (fast, slow, etc.). Make sure you join in the fun by participating with your child.

Content Standards: Children will participate in a variety of gross-motor activities to develop control, balance, strength and coordination.

MEANINGFUL MATH



Try some of these fun counting games with your child while you are doing things around the house or just to burn off some extra energy.

- Count the number of stairs you go up and down. Can you count backwards too?
- Count how many times you can jump rope.
- How many skips does it take to get across the room? How many to the mailbox?
- Bounce a ball once, then twice, then three times, then four times – how high can you go?
- Throw a beanbag to a friend – how many times can you throw it back and forth without dropping it?

In a darkened room, make a “spotlight” on the wall with a flashlight, and let your child cast a shadow balancing on one foot, standing on tiptoe, holding out a leg or arm, flapping like a bird, or doing ballet. Count how long they can balance.

Help your child make “body shapes” by bending into the letter “C” or “O.” What other shapes can your body become? Create some shapes standing and some shapes lying on the floor.

Content Standard: Children will begin to develop an understanding of numbers.



DINING



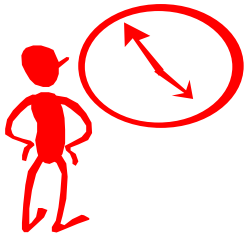
Funny Face Carrot Salad

- *2 carrots*
- *1 small can crushed pineapple*
- *1/2 c. vanilla yogurt*
- *raisins*

Peel carrots. Have your child roll up a few long shavings, and save them for “hair” on a final salad. Grate carrots with a grater. Be careful of your fingers. Drain can of crushed pineapples in a strainer, using a spoon to push out the juice. Toss pineapple with carrots, then add vanilla yogurt. Spoon some salad onto a plate. Make a smiling face with raisins. Style carrot “hair,” and serve with a smile.

Content Standards: Children will explore and use a variety of materials to develop artistic expression.

A MINUTE FOR MANAGEMENT ON...



WHINING

When parents were asked what behavior they would like to change in their four-year-old, it was unanimous - whining! Whining is an attention-getting behavior. To stop your child's whining, ignore the behavior that you will not tolerate, and help him replace it with an appropriate one.

Sadie (in a whining voice) asks for apple juice.

Try: "I can't understand you when you are whining. When you are ready to talk, I will listen." If you respond with nagging or scolding, you have given her the attention that was her goal. When Sadie attempts to change her tone of voice, use positive feedback. "I would be happy to get you some apple juice, since I understand you better." If the whining continues, state your need for them to change their tone in a polite but firm way. Initially, these behaviors take time to change.

REMEMBER to be consistent. If you answer your child the next time she whines, you are telling her, "it is okay to whine." Always follow through.

INCLUSION CORNER



My Child Has Been Diagnosed With A Special Need, What Now?

Children who are ages 3-21 years old are eligible to receive free services from the local school system of the county in which they reside. These services should include an Individual Education Program (IEP), which is a written statement for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in a meeting with the parent and local school system in accordance with certain requirements of law and regulations. An IEP is a legal document. It sets out the individualized instruction and related services for your child. Two general purposes of the IEP are:

- To establish measurable annual goals, which may include benchmarks or short-term objectives for the child.
- To state the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services that the school district will provide to, or on behalf of, the child.

Tips for IEP meetings:

- Bring others to the meeting, who work with or can act on behalf of your child, who can help advocate for him/her.
- Make sure you are comfortable with the IEP before signing it.
- Parents can call an IEP meeting as often as they like to address concerns.

Additional Resources: For more information about inclusion of children with special needs, visit our website at <http://www.decal.ga.gov> or check with the Inclusion Coordinator at your local Resource & Referral Agency. Visit www.gaccrra.org for a complete listing of Resource & Referral agencies.



Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, SE, East Tower Suite 754, Atlanta, GA 30334
404-656-5957 or 1-888-4GA-PREK
www.decal.ga.gov